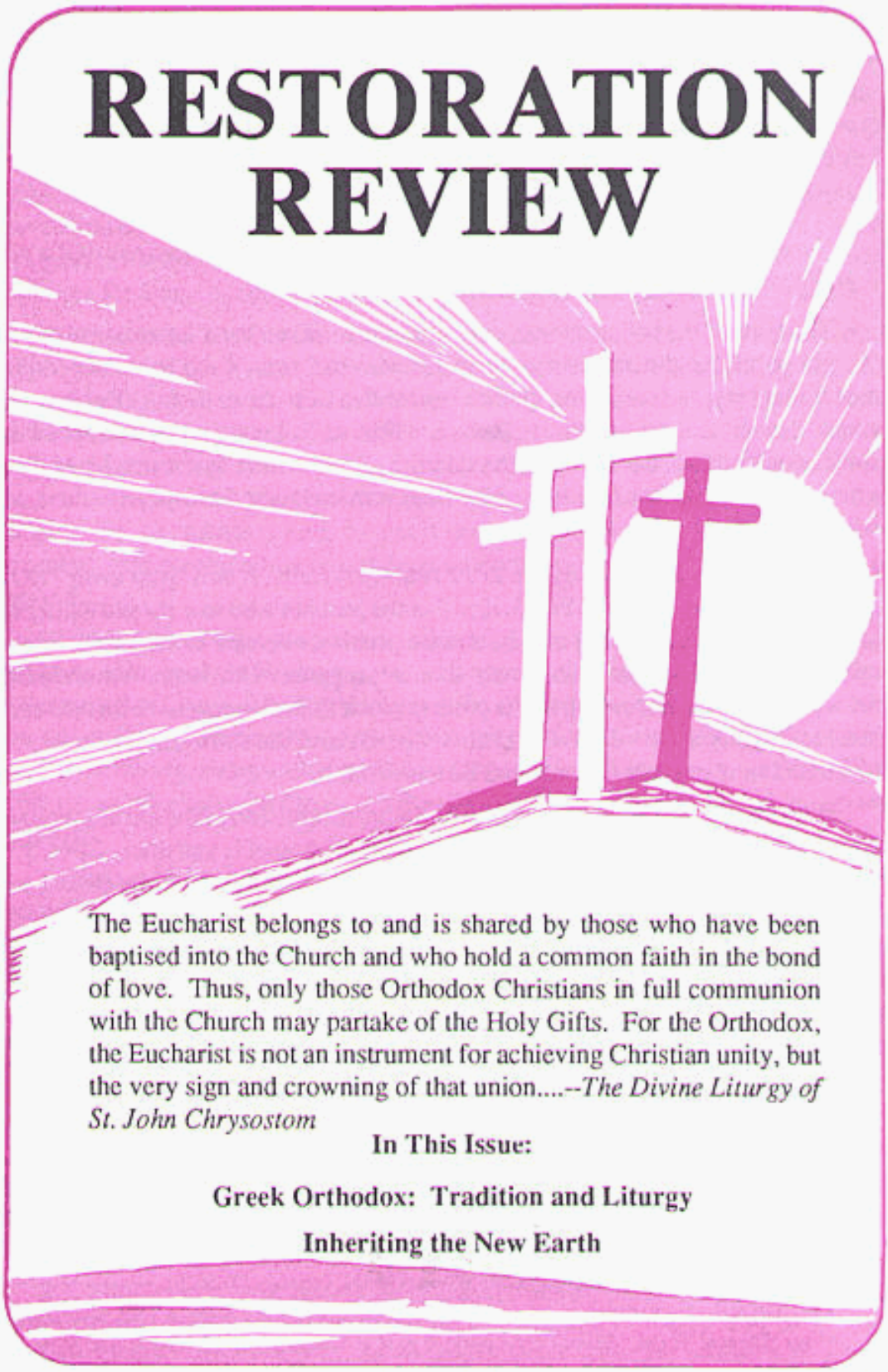
RESTORATION REVIEW



The Eucharist belongs to and is shared by those who have been baptised into the Church and who hold a common faith in the bond of love. Thus, only those Orthodox Christians in full communion with the Church may partake of the Holy Gifts. For the Orthodox, the Eucharist is not an instrument for achieving Christian unity, but the very sign and crowning of that union....--*The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*

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Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1989

The hope of the Believer...No. 4

INHERITING THE EARTH

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Mt. 5:7)

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Pet. 2:13)

The hope of the believer is not only in a future heaven but a future earth as Well. We not only have the promise of "going to heaven," even if the Bible never quite puts it that way, but of "going to earth" as well, a *new* earth that is. But it is also a *new* heaven that we hope for. There is a heaven and earth with which we have some acquaintance, but we are assured in Rev. 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea."

Something is going to happen to the first (old) earth. It will "pass away" (Rev. 21:1) and be "burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). But the prophet who saw the old earth pass away saw a new earth in the offing, and the prophet who saw the old earth burned up went on to add that great word that is pregnant with hope, *Nevertheless.* "Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:14). Even if the earth that we know is to be burned up there will nevertheless be a new earth.

Both Peter and Paul indicate that the flaming destruction of the old heavens and the old earth is for the destruction of the wicked, both angels and men. 2 Pet. 3:10 tells us that "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up." Back in verse 7 he relates this to the destruction of ungodly men: "the heavens and the earth that now exist are kept in store for the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Paul in 2 Thess. 1:8-9 presents a similar description: when Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire he will take vengeance on those who refuse to know God and reject the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus also referred to this "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). Rev. 21:14 reveals that "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." This indicates that the burning of the old earth and the conflagration of the heavens is the lake of fire that destroys wicked people and angels alike. If

Eph. 2:2 tells us that the evil spirits in some way occupy the air about us, Satan being "the prince of the power of the air," then we may see in Peter's words, "the heavens are reserved for fire," a description of the demonic world being destroyed in the firestorm that melts heaven and earth with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:10). The heavens being on fire would thus refer to the atmosphere of air about us, where the evil spirits are kept in prison until time for them to "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," according to Jude 6-7.

This makes the burning old earth hell or the lake of fire, which will bum as long as God purposes, but it apparently ends once the wicked are sufficiently punished and eventually destroyed. Out of this eventually emerges the new earth which becomes the dwelling place of the righteous, which will have no end. The first earth is marked for the fiery destruction of the wicked; the new earth will be the dwelling place of the righteous. The first eventually ends (in the ultimate destruction of the wicked); the second never ends in that it becomes the dwelling place of the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from God, which we shall deal with presently.

We should note in passing who it is that the Bible identifies as lost. It is not the vast hosts of humanity who may have had no opportunity to know the God of heaven or the gospel of Christ. The Bible says it is the wicked who will be destroyed in the lake of fire, those who reject God and who refuse to believe and who do things they know to be wrong, along with the devil and his angels. We would do well to let the Bible tell us who is destined to go to a devil's hell rather than to make that judgment ourselves.

At this point our hope is enhanced all the more in that we have assurance that the righteous will be taken from the earth to be with Christ "in the air" so as to escape the hell that will be on earth. The promise is in 1 Thess. 4:15-17. In those verses Paul assures us that the believers living on the earth at the time Christ comes again will be joined by those believers "who are asleep" ("The dead in Christ shall rise first," verse 16), and then he says in verse 17: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

While the Scriptures teach that the wicked will also be raised, there is no indication that they will ever leave the old earth. They appear to be destined to perish in the grand conflagration, while the righteous are with Jesus "in the air" or in that part of heaven where Jesus is.

But there is more to the breathtaking drama since the earth that passes away and is burned up, along with the wicked, yet has a destiny. There will be a new, renovated earth. According to the promise, which was first given in Is. 65:17 ("Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind"), the old earth becomes a new earth. We have the promise of a new *earth* as well as new heavens. In our

view of the future we have been slow to see that the earth has a destiny and that that destiny is for the righteous. All these facts indicate that the new earth will be heaven, the eternal home of God's elect.

Since heaven hovers low in the book of Hebrews, it is well to look there for references to the coming city of God. Therein Abraham, who moved across the nomadic wastelands of the world, is described as one "who looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Referring to the heroes of the faith, Heb. 11:16 says, "God has prepared for them a city." In Heb. 12:22-23 the city of the living God is called the heavenly Jerusalem and it is inhabited by innumerable angels and the spirits of just people made perfect. Heb 13:14 assures us that the city is permanent, unlike this transient world. Here we have a real city, God's city, the New Jerusalem in heaven, where the righteous dead are now with Christ.

Rev. 21 tells us how this heavenly city is related to the new earth or how the new earth becomes the New Jerusalem. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth," the prophet discloses, and he tells us that the first heaven and first earth had by now passed away. In verse 2 John describes how "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God." In the rich symbolism the prophet sees the heavenly city making a move - from heaven to earth! The heavenly city and the new earth are now one. The description that follows is of heaven itself: God and Christ are there; no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death, all tears are wiped away; no temple is needed for the entire city is God's temple and filled with His glory. The saints of God are now at home, forever, in the holy city on the new earth.

There is a millennium in this framework somewhere, as Rev. 20 indicates, but it does not appear to be on earth. When John sees the city of God come down out of heaven to the new earth, he is not describing the millennium. It has already ended in Rev. 20, and it seems to be describing the martyrs in a heavenly reign with Christ — *"they* lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," that is "the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus" (verse 4). There is no indication that this is on earth, but in heaven, nor for the saints in general but for the martyred souls. The thousand years is almost certainly figurative, and may refer to the period from the return of Christ to heaven following his resurrection to the final overthrow of all the powers of evil and the final judgment (Rev. 12-20). During this time martyred saints not only reign with Christ but actually rule from thrones, as if playing some part in the overthrow of all the Satanic powers.

The Scriptures give us no assurance that we will have glory, triumph, or a millennium of peace and victory in this old earth. A glorious kingdom on this earth in which the righteous will rule over others is an old Jewish misconception, one that caused the Jewish leaders to reject what Jesus meant by a coming kingdom of heaven. We may well have to live under the

Cross as long as we are in this world. "In the world you will have tribulation" our Lord says in Jn. 16:33, and in Mt. 24 he gives a grim picture of the future of this world, which he sees as destined to pass away (verse 35). But there is the promise of the new earth, and therein lies our hope. The word for "new" in the Greek indicates that the new earth is not created out of nothing, but is fashioned anew out of the old earth. It is the redeemed old earth, purified by fire as it were, that becomes the new earth. The new earth is indeed *earth*, a real place in God's tomorrow. It is the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us in heaven, the heavenly city with its many dwelling places, which eventually comes down out of heaven to the new earth.

The nature of the new earth is glorious to anticipate. Paul indulges somewhat in this in Rom. 8, which leads him to say, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (verse 18). He goes on to tell how "the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God" and that "the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." He sees this earth and all creation suffering birth pangs, waiting to be delivered from their corruption. The apostle sees the earth under the penalty of sin, like man, waiting for its redemption. It is clear that Paul sees the old earth, "subjected to futility," becoming a redeemed earth. All this sounds appropriate coming from one who had himself visited Paradise and heard unutterable words! What little he utters about the coming new earth is sufficient to lift our minds beyond the cares of this present world. Little wonder that he would go on to say, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

One promise that our Lord makes, that the meek shall inherit the earth, refers to this world as well as the next. There is a sense in which this world is ours for the taking, as Paul says in 1 Cor. 3:22, "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come — all are yours." Here is another important dimension of inheriting the earth, even this earth. Jesus means and Paul means that the first earth is also to be a blessing to the believer. All things are yours, including this world! It is for the meek, those who humbly live in this world to the glory of God.

Meekness is Christlikeness. It includes a true view of oneself. The meek person never pities himself nor feels sorry for himself, and he never thinks of retaliation. He may sometimes be angry, but always at the right time and never at the wrong time. Such ones shall inherit the earth because they have the right perspective of things and are thus satisfied with their lot in life, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" as Paul puts it in 2 Cor. 6:10. Such ones inherit this earth as well as the new earth to come.

But it is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, in a new heaven and a new earth that is the ultimate destiny of the redeemed community, for we have here no abiding city. We hear God's voice from heaven, "Behold, I make all things new," and we believe. With such hope we need have no fear of death, for life really begins at death. When we leave this world we do not leave home but go home, to the heavenly city whose builder and maker is God, and to the new earth where the righteous will dwell together forever, with no separate suburbs.

The saintly Newman speaks for all who really believe:

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!

—the Editor

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

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MIGHT JUDAS BE IN HEAVEN?

Heaven will almost certainly have its surprises. We may be surprised that some of those we thought to be "righteous" are nowhere to be found. We might even be surprised to find ourselves there, considering all the uncertainties that so many of us harbor about "being good enough." We are likely to be surprised, if we have had a sectarian spirit, to find those in heaven that we have rejected in this world.

It is enough to say that there are likely Lobe multiplied millions in heaven from all cultures, nations, and religions that we from our narrow perspective will be surprised to see. And from every conceivable background and circumstance, including many who committed atrocious sins in this world, for they will all be sinners saved by God's grace. Might this include Judas Iscariot, who might well be described as the most tragic figure in human history?

I am not saying that I believe Judas is in heaven, but I am saying that I believe he might be. In view of the overwhelming mercy of God, anyone might be! But my main purpose herein is to suggest that we should be a bit uncomfortable in putting distance between ourselves and the likes of Judas - "all those awful sinners Out there." We are all sinners together and it is risky to try to separate us into bad sinners and not-so-bad sinners. It implies that we do not need God's grace as much as the really serious sinners.

We can't be sure that Paul knew the story of Judas. He might have mentioned him when he referred to "the night in which Jesus was betrayed," but he did not. But even so Paul still thought of himself as "the chief of sinners," not Judas. That means that the greatest sinner of all, by his own measure, is now in heaven. That is God's grace!

There are deep mysteries relative to the Bible's most tragic figure. After praying all night for guidance in choosing those who would be his closest disciples, Jesus chose Judas as one of twelve men to be trusted. In Jn. 6:71 our Lord makes the remarkable statement, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil." Surely we are not to conclude that Jesus knew when he selected Judas that he would serve as an agent of Satan. Jesus also once referred to Peter as Satan. Another mystery is Judas' reaction when his foul deed in some way went contrary to his expectations, in spite of its success. Not only did he give back the money that his evil deed brought him, but he went on to kill himself. Did Judas betray one that he really loved and believed in?

Are we to resolve part of the mystery the way Peter did in Acts 1:16 by saying Judas did what he did because "this Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus"? Peter says Judas did what he did because the Holy Spirit prophesied that he would do it! Another apostle says that it was Satan who put it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus (Jn. 13:2), and goes on to explain that it was at the Supper when "Satan entered into Judas," leading Jesus to tell him to go on and do quickly what he planned to do (Jn. 13:27). Was Jesus here yielding to Satan, recognizing that one of his disciples was but the agent of a foreordained cosmic event. Jesus said as much later in the garden when his enemies came to arrest him. After reminding them that he had taught daily in public and that there was need to come after him with swords and clubs, he said to them, "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lk. 22:53).

Jesus appears to be following a script written in eternity according to God's foreordained plan, and Judas is part of its decree. When Judas kissed Jesus in the garden, so as to identify him for the mob, the Lord said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Lk. 22:48). But when the mob surrounded him and made him a prisoner Jesus also explained why he would not do what he had the power to do, summon an army of angels to

his rescue, "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen thus" (Mt. 26:54). Again, as if summarizing all the events of "the hour of darkness," including Judas' treacherous deed, he says, "All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Mt. *26:56).*

Could Judas therefore, like Geraldine, excuse himself on grounds that "The devil made me do it!"? The Scriptures make it clear that throughout the entire betrayal episode Judas behaved as a free man. He freely chose to betray his Lord, else he would not have killed himself in remorse, and yet it was decreed in God's eternal purpose that he would be the villain in the drama of the world's darkest hour. The Director already had Judas' name printed on the program! It is an inexplicable mystery. But the cosmic dimensions of poor Judas' role should at least cause us to be less judgmental of him, if not to forgive him. Ah, forgive him! Can we forgive him?

Did not our blessed Lord forgive him when he prayed on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was for the ungodly, not the righteous, for whom Christ died. Surely even Judas is not beyond the reach of God's mercy, and does he need that grace any more than the rest of us? Since we all betray our faith in many and varied ways, would it be all that inappropriate to have Judas within the fellowship of the church? He would not be the first member of which it could be said "Satan entered into his heart"! Who among us can claim that it is always Christ in his heart and never Satan?

While the Biblical picture of Judas is rather dark, there are some things that indicate there was another side to him. We are to remember that Jesus after careful determination and prayer chose Judas as an apostle from scores of faithful followers. Surely he was not then possessed of the devil, but one of deep faith and devotion. He must have given three years of faithful service as an apostle before "the hour of darkness" came. He was selected to serve as treasurer for the apostolic community, a position of trust. There was no suspicion of his loyalty, up to the very end, for when Jesus told the twelve that one of them would betray him, no one pointed an accusing finger at Judas. Each one rather said "Is it I, Lord?," which reveals that they were all aware of their vulnerability. After all, before that night was over, they all ran for their lives, leaving the Master to shift for himself. Except for Peter, who went for his sword in his typically rash fashion, and yet within hours he denied his Lord not once but thrice. It shows that Judas was not the only sinner among the apostles.

Even when Judas left the upper room to do his foul deed, no apostle suspected him. It was he that took care of business matters, so they supposed Jesus had sent him on an errand, to buy food or give something to the poor, the kind of things Judas often did.

What could have been Judas' motive in betraying his Lord? Surely not money, however much he loved it, for thirty pieces of silver (around $15 in our money) was a mere pittance for the most wanted "criminal" around. If it was silver that he was after, why did he in the end throw it away?

It could hardly be that for whatever reason his love for Jesus had turned to hate, and so he wanted to see him die. He would not have been so distraught as to commit suicide if the scenario had gone as he planned. It is evident that things did not go as Judas intended. The fact that he threw the money back at those who gave it to him, crying out, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood," shows that Jesus was still close to his heart. How could one live with Jesus for three years and not love him?

The theory most compatible with the facts is that Judas had grown impatient with Jesus' reluctance to assert himself as the Messiah that Judas believed him to be, and so by betraying him he would force him to act. Like other of the apostles and the general public, Judas looked to Jesus as a conquering Messiah, who, by revolutionary means if necessary, would set the nation free of Roman oppression. There is some evidence that the name "Iscariot," which he was called (not a family name), associates him with the Sicarri, a dagger sect that believed in a violent overthrown of the Roman yoke. Simon Zealotes, another apostle, seems to have had such connections in his background.

That the apostles expected some kind of displacement of Roman domination and a new rule by Jesus is evident. They argued over who would have key positions in such a kingdom. James and John even asked Jesus if they might be deputy governors, ruling at his side. In spite of Jesus' continual emphasis upon the spiritual nature of the new reign of God that he was bringing, there is little evidence that even his own disciples really understood. Even after his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection they ask him, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6).

This may well be why Judas was led to take such drastic measures. If Jesus was confronted by armed force, he would at last act with all the powers of a conquering Messiah, Judas may have supposed. "The one I kiss, he is the one," Judas said to Jewish leaders, "seize him." Was Judas convinced that Jesus could not be taken by force? He had seen folk try to seize him before, but he always eluded them. Judas never expected the Master to be captured, certainly not for long, much less to be killed. He rather hoped for an uprising, led by Jesus. When it became evident that Jesus was going to be executed, Judas' world fell apart. Could he any longer believe that Jesus was the expected Messiah, now that he was seized and manhandled by his enemies? He saw no solution but self-destruction.

If Judas could have believed what Jesus taught the disciples over and over, that he would be crucified but after three days he would rise, he would have reason to live on, and he could have righted things. It is amazing that on that first Good Friday when Jesus died and was buried there was not a single person in all the world that believed he would rise from the dead, not even his disciples to whom he had divulged the good news.

Judas was remorseful, according to Mt. 27:3. There was one noble thing he could do: repudiate his act in the face of those who bribed him, men he must have hated with a passion. In his agony he bore his soul to the corrupt leaders that shared his guilt: "I have sinned, I have betrayed innocent blood." He didn't say that he had betrayed the Christ. He might then have been confused about who Jesus was. But he knew one thing, Jesus was a good and righteous man, and he had sinned in betraying him.

At this point the Jewish leaders reveal their degeneracy as never before. Even though Judas had given them the evil triumph they had long sought, they hadn't the slightest concern for his desperate plight. "What is that to us. That's your problem." Judas must have seethed with hatred in the face of such calloused pride and arrogance. It says that they were in the temple, probably at the entrance to the Holy Place. Judas did a dramatic and noble thing. In his fury he threw the thirty pieces of filthy lucre at the feet of the filthy men who were partakers with him of his grievous deed. He saw to it that it did concern them and that it was their problem. They had the blood money of their own bloodly act scattered over their sacred precincts, a problem they had to deal with. He was saying to them what they had said to him, *See you to it!* Good for Judas. Great show.

The poor, wretched soul lost no time in doing himself in, and the horror of his death was probably well calculated. He hanged himself in such a way that his body dashed against the rocks with such fury that "he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out" (Acts 1:18).

What tragedy! But amidst the tragedy Judas was nobler than many of us. He could say "I have sinned" and say it loud and clear. And in his last hour he proclaimed to those who needed the most to hear it, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they chose to murder, was an innocent and just man.

The essence of the tragedy is shared by us all who profess to follow Jesus Christ, and that is that Judas was never quite willing to accept Jesus for what he was. He wanted to make him over. He wanted it his way. Jesus made it clear that the kingdom he brought was heavenly, not earthy, and that its weapons were spiritual, not carnal. Poor Judas wanted to rewrite the script, and so, mortal man though he was, he took eternity into his own hands. But are we all that different? In our proud materialistic world, mirrored even in the church itself, do we really take the claims of Christ seriously? And with all the advantages that we have that Judas never

had, in how many ways do we betray the Christ and crucify him afresh? If we had been there with Judas and the other disciples, where would we have been on that first Easter morning? Judas was dead and the others were hiding in fear of their lives. When they all fled would we have stayed? Would we have been at the tomb "while it was yet dark" waiting to greet the Lord of glory?

Any man who dies in remorse for his wretchedness, confessing himself to be a sinner, is a candidate for God's mercy. And we will leave it to those who have not sinned after the similitude of Judas to cast the first stone. — *the Editor*

Alexander Campbell's New Earth

> The present material universe, yet unrevealed in all its area, in all the tenantries, in all its riches, beauty and grandeur, will be wholly regenerated. Of this fact we have full assurance; since he that now sits upon the Throne of the Universe, has pledged his word for it, saying, "Behold, I will create all things new: -consequently "new heavens, new earth, "consequently, new tenantries, new employments, new pleasures, new joys new ecstasies. There is a fullness of joy, a fullness of glory, and a fullness of blessedness, of which no living man, however enlightened, however enlarged, however gifted, ever formed or entertained one adequate conception. — *Millennial Harbinger, 1865, p.517.*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

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RECOGNITION OF THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS (1)

W. Carl Ketcherside

The Christian is one who accepts as a fact that the ongoing history of mankind was interrupted by a unique event in which the Eternal One broke through the flesh curtain, and entered the realm of time and space. Deity was manifest in human form in the person of Jesus

of Nazareth. This divine-human encounter took place in the days of Augustus Caesar when Rome was mistress of the world, and specifically in an outlying province of the empire called Palestine.

Although it was singular, this advent was not unexpected. At the time the world was divided into two ethnic groups-Jew and Gentile-and the evidence is that both of these had been conditioned to expect the coming of a divine personage to share the fate of mankind and to alter the destiny of the world.

The Jews generally accepted as a fact that their remote ancestor, Abraham, had been called out from the polytheistic culture and influence of Chaldea, in order to become the progenitor of a race through which the God that made heaven and earth would eventually bless all the families of the earth. It was not held that the blessing would accrue from the race as a whole, but rather that it would produce an individual through whose beneficent rule peace would reign upon the earth.

The foundation of this hope lay in both promise and prediction. An example of the latter is found in the last words of Jacob to his sons, the tribal heads who gathered about his bedside for his final blessing. Unto Judah he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10) The word "Shiloh" was interpreted as meaning "the Tranquilizer, the Pacificator, the Peacemaker." It is understood to mean that a rule of peace would be inaugurated upon earth through the ministrations of one sent from God for that purpose.

That this is true is evidenced by the rendering in the various Targums. The Jerusalem Targum reads, "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skillful doctors of the law from their children's children, till the time come when the King Messiah shall come." The Chaldean version says, "One having principality shall not be taken from the house of Judah; nor a scribe from his children's children, until the Messiah come, whose the kingdom is."

It is important to note that the tribal identity of Judah, was to be preserved until the peacemaker should come, and that His coming was identified with rulership or dominion. In other words peace would reign because of the reign of the Messiah. When He was regarded as having authority in the lives of men, and his rule was respected, peace and tranquility would ensue, and unity would prevail through the magnetism of His personality. "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

It was because of the firm belief in the coming of the Messiah that the Jews regarded themselves as recipients of and guardians of the oracles of God. This stimulated their reading of Torah and Hafterah, law and prophets, and prepared them to expect the Messiah. At the time when Jesus was upon the earth, and his forerunner was proclaiming the imminent

approach of the kingdom "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he was the Messiah, or not." (Luke 3:15). The Jewish nation at that very time, because of ardent study of the covenant scriptures, was instructed to believe that the advent of the Messiah was imminent.

At the same time, the non-Jewish world was seething in an undercurrent of hope which centered around the advent of a divine personage. We cannot pause here along the way to trace the origin of the pagan yearning, or even to review the means by which the hope came to be centered in a person, although the temptation to do so is almost irresistible. We must content ourselves with brief references which will serve to document what we have suggested and then move on to weighty matters of deduction.

The Jews had been dispersed through all nations, and many of them had been given positions of influence and trust. Always scholarly in the field of religion, they contributed much to the ferment of thought in such places as Alexandria, Tarsus and Rome, centers of learning. Unquestionably, their knowledge of the prophetic writings had an impact upon the pagan world. (To be continued) *—4420 Jamieson, 1-C, St. Louis, MO. 63109*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

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Visiting Other Churches: New Series, No. 4...

GREEK ORTHODOX: TRADITION AND LITURGY

Since there is no Orthodox Church in Denton, I drove into Dallas to visit the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, which happens to be across the street from Dallas Theological Seminary. There is of course no relationship between the two, and in terms of history, tradition, and theology they are worlds apart. The seminary is independent Protestant and interdenominational, and of recent origin, being the leading seminary of the Scofield/Bible Church movement. It thus lacks the historical roots, rich tradition, and catholicity that is evident across the street. The Greek Orthodox is a part of the great Orthodox tradition that

traces its history all the way back to the New Testament churches themselves. While the Russian Orthodox Church recently celebrated its first 1,000 years, the Greek church goes back much farther, tracing its origins in the Greek-speaking churches of what was once Asia Minor, churches planted by Paul himself.

Orthodox churches are rich in symbolism, which begins with the architecture of their buildings, which are usually modest in size, plainly adorned on the outside, and elegantly appointed on the inside with colorful icons and elaborate stained-glass windows. This symbolizes what God desires for his people, who may be simple and unadorned in outward appearance but who are to be elegantly beautiful and imposing on the inside. This is one distinction between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, who richly adorn their edifices, within and without, with images of the saints. You will never find an image (round, body-like figures) in an Orthodox Church. Icons but not images. Icons are paintings usually found on walls and stained-glass windows.

Orthodoxy has always rejected images, such as those of Christ and the Virgin Mary, as idolatry, and even icons have been a point of controversy through the centuries. But the concept of icons being "opened books to remind one of God" prevailed, and so the seventh Ecumenical Council decreed them as worthy of veneration and reverence but not to be worshipped. While they bow before them and kiss them, it is not the icon that is worshipped but what they represent. Orthodox also venerate portions of Holy Scripture that are always on the altar during the liturgy, bowing before them and kissing them, but again it is God that is worshipped, they insist, and not the Bible as such.

After attending an early service at a Church of Christ, I arrived at the Dallas church at 10 a.m., in time for the weekly liturgy ,a service that lasted well over two hours and included Holy Communion. Every Orthodox church in the world celebrates the Lord's Supper every Sunday, as has been the tradition all these centuries. But it is served only to the Orthodox. The priest stood at the altar and, using a small spoon, placed a few drops of wine on the tongue of each communicant without touching the mouth, while the communicant helped himself to a portion of eucharistic bread (leavened). If you are not of the Orthodox faith the priest will not serve you. That the bread is leavened is reflective of another theological dispute with Rome, which uses unleavened bread. But the major dispute with Rome, which was the main issue in the Great Schism that separated the eastern (Constantinople) and western (Rome) churches, in 1054 A.D., was the claim of papal authority. Orthodoxy has always repudiated the papacy and viewed the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope as blasphemous and heretical. While they believe authority resides in the church, as does Rome, it is in the whole church and is rooted in Scripture and Tradition, not in a single bishop or pope.

The Orthodox Church is thus known as the church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils that have been called through the centuries, which have determined true doctrine, especially about the nature of Christ. The whole church is represented by the scores or hundreds of bishops that gather in holy consultation. If you have trouble seeing this as authoritative, they would point you to the ecumenical conference in Acts 15, wherein the whole church through its leaders determined true doctrine. Orthodoxy has continued these, and to them it is the authority of Tradition (with a capital T), along with Scripture. As in the case of Acts 15, it is the Holy Spirit that leads in the conclusions that are reached. Arianism, a doctrine that denied the preexistence of Christ, was thus declared a heresy at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

The extended liturgy, to which the communicants slowly gather (At 10 a.m. I was virtually alone; an hour later the sanctuary was filled), is sung and chanted in Greek, much of the antiphons (response of the people) coming from the choir in the balcony. It goes on and on, culminating in the elevation of the chalice when its contents become the body and blood of Christ. They reject the notion that the wine and bread merely symbolize the body and blood of our Lord. Jesus said at the first liturgy, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." They take it for what it says, but they make no effort to explain *how.* It is a mystery that only God knows.

In most all Orthodox churches the worshipers stand throughout the long liturgy, which makes for closer fellowship, they claim, since the people can be close to each other and move among each other, which is encouraged. There are usually no pews, but in the Dallas church as in all American Orthodoxy there is seating—an innovation from long standing tradition. Most singing is by a choir, but there is sometimes congregational singing—and without instruments of music! There is no organ or piano in an Orthodox church, except again in some American churches. They explain why: "In the Orthodox Church today, as in the early Church, singing is unaccompanied and instrumental music is not found, except among certain Orthodox in America." You didn't miss those words, *as in the early Church,* did you?

The Dallas church did have an organ in the balcony with the choir, but it was so subdued as to be barely distinguishable. The choir's part of the liturgy, all sung in Greek (New Testament Greek, not modern) was breathtakingly beautiful. The organ never played except as background assistance to the choir. Their worship is designed to create fellowship between the church in heaven and the church on earth, "the walls of the church open out upon eternity," as they put it. If you could hear their singing you would suppose that angels could not be far away.

They baptize by immersion unto the remission of sins, trine immersion, into the name of the Father (one dip), of the Son (second dip), and of the Holy Spirit (third dip). This is what they see in Mt. 28:19. This includes infants, but only children of the household of faith.

Infants are immersed three times, after which they are given Communion, which they continue to take all their lives. The Orthodox Church is distressed that most western churches "baptize" by sprinkling a little water on the head. They say that this destroys the correspondence between the outward form and the inward meaning, and it "abandons the primitive practice of baptism by immersion." They state outright that immersion is essential, except in emergencies. They usually wear a cross around their necks, reminding them that they have been baptized and are to behave accordingly.

While Communion is served every Sunday, only a small number partakes at any one time. This is because they are to prepare for such a sacred experience by fasting and prayer. The average Orthodox may actually partake of the Supper no more than five or six times a year, though some partake weekly. But they do an unusual thing at the end of the service. Those in attendance file toward the front to greet the priest as they leave the sanctuary, at which time they pick up a small cube of blessed bread (leavened and toast-like). As I filed by I quietly avoided the priest and the bread, supposing it was not for a non-Orthodox soul like me. But the priest, whom I had met on a previous visit, reached for me, took my hand, and invited me to take a piece of the bread. As I walked out nibbling on it I tried to discipline my mind as in Communion, only to discover later that it was no part of Holy Communion at all! The priest would not have served me "Holy Communion."

It was not clear to me what the bread was for or what it meant, but I was told in no uncertain terms, when I suggested otherwise, that it was *not* Communion. "So that each one can take something with him from the church and not feel left out, we give the bread," I was told. But still it was eucharistic bread, blessed by the priest, and yet not part of the liturgy.

There are three major "Holy Orders"-bishop, priest, deacons- filled by men only. Unlike the Roman Church, the clergy may marry, but they must do so before they take orders. If a priest's wife dies he cannot remarry. Divorce is unthinkable. Some priests choose celibacy, but such ones usually become monks. The church is episcopal, ruled by bishops. The head of an autocephalus church, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, etc., etc. is called a Patriarch. The Patriarch of Constantinople (Greek Orthodox) would be equivalent to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Church of England, for neither man has any more authority over the church at large than any other bishop, even if he is more prominent. The bishop that rules over a diocese or province is called a Metropolitan or Archbishop. The clergy wear richly ornamented clerical garbs and are nearly always, if not always, bearded, imposing figures indeed. All bishops, as representatives of the whole church, have equal authority in running the church and in preserving Tradition. No popes are cardinals allowed!

My visit was delightful as well as informative. I had lots of fun in a social in the fellowship hall after the long service. The folk sat around tables talking to each other in Greek! Even the kids were calling to each other in Greek. It is of course a Greek community, part of some two million Greeks in this country, the most famous of which is of course Michael Dukakis, who would have fitted perfectly in this Dallas church. They are white, affluent, educated, and bilingual—except for one old Greek who was unable to respond to me in English. While the church is in inner-city Dallas, they drive in from the suburbs. They are a family church, with lots going on, including a substantial Sunday School program. Their children are an important part of the community of faith. They take the baptism of a child with great seriousness, with lots of support and elaborate Tradition—and lots of time! Were they to witness a baptismal service at a Church of Christ or witness the way we serve the Lord's Supper (and the way we chatter in our pews up to the time someone gets up and says "Good morning"!) they would be puzzled. Our people often serve Communion without even pronouncing the Words of Institution, as Jesus did and as the Orthodox do. "This is worship?," I can hear them asking if present at one of our services.

When I describe the Dallas church as typically American upper class, this is not the case with the Orthodox Church worldwide, which is made up of not only many of the poorest and most deprived people of the world but the most oppressed and persecuted. In Russia since the 1917 Communist takeover the church has been reduced from 100 million to less than half that. The Armenian church was virtually obliterated when the Turks committed genocide against those noble people. The church has been oppressed in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Poland, Czechoslovakia. Since most of the Orthodox are in countries behind the Iron Curtain, most of them have lost their freedom and have been terribly oppressed. When they are free to worship, as in Russia more recently, they flock to their churches. The great Greek Church has enjoyed more freedom, being part of the free world.

During a Sunday service back in 1054 A.D. at the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), a cardinal and two legates from the pope marched down the aisle of the sanctuary, not to worship, but to place a Bull of Excommunication upon the altar. In defiance they turned on their heels and marched out, shaking the dust from their feet in the doorway and crying out "Let God look and judge!", all because the Orthodox would not accept the pope of Rome as head of the universal church. A deacon ran after them, insisting that they take the Bull back. It fell on the street unclaimed. Such was the beginning of the Great Schism that separated the church into East and West, Orthodox and Roman Catholic. It is the severest of all the divisions of Christendom. While some believe that a union of the two would do wonders in uniting the church everywhere, it cannot be so long as the pope claims universal authority over Christendom. In all these 900 years there has been little contact between Rome and Constantinople.

The Orthodox are of a different tradition and a different culture, separated by political and economic forces as well as religious. The so-called Dark Ages mean nothing to them, nor does Luther and the Protestant Reformation or the Counter Reformation. To the Orthodox the Roman Church was already apostate, long before any Reformation, which made no real difference, for now there is not only Rome but her children as well.

The Orthodox can help us see what our own pioneers were saying when they insisted "We are Catholics." They show us also the place of Tradition, and force us to admit that we are all influenced by Tradition. With none of us is it "the Bible and the Bible alone," for we are all dependent upon the church's long struggle to interpret the Bible and determine its meaning in a changing world. None of us is willing to send the Bible out as the only missionary. We send our own people along to make sure they understand it the way we do!

The Orthodox will also help us to see the deeper dimensions of the Body of Christ in corporate worship. Being with them more we might question our preacher-centered, sermon-oriented services and give more thought to prayer, meditation, fasting, commitment, serious Bible reading, and the Table of the Lord. At the Dallas church there were two hours of liturgical worship, all centered on Holy Communion, with lots of audience participation, and finally an eight minute sermon.

We can learn from others, especially from the ancient churches, by being with them more and by being willing to indulge in some self-examination. — *the Editor*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1989

DIVORCE HER!

Cecil Hook

Throughout history it has been difficult for a single woman to live independently. This has been true especially when she has had to provide for her children. She has found it to be expedient, if not necessary, to marry so as to have a husband to provide for her.

When a husband was displeased with his wife and caused a separation without giving her a divorce, it was a special form of cruelty, for she would not be free to marry another man. Because of the hardheartedness of her husband, she would be driven into an impoverished and outcast state.

The Pharisees tested Jesus with questions about marriage and divorce (Mt. 19:3-9). Jesus assured them that God intended that marriage ties would be permanent; yet Moses had commanded that a certificate of divorce be given by the man who put his wife away. The reason: "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

Because it was unmerciful to send a wife away to be denied the support of a husband, Moses had said, "Divorce her!" Being divorced, she would be free to remarry. This merciful course alleviated the hardheartedness and pain of being rejected and driven out.

If Jesus had not granted that same protection for the rejected wife, he would have been giving approval of the callous heart of the husband.

When we contend that the divorced wife cannot remarry, we are laying the same cruel burden on the woman.

When we declare that her only appropriate course of action is to remain single or return to her husband, we fail to recognize that Moses would not permit her to return to her first husband after being divorced and remarried (Dt. 24: 1f.). Divorcing her second husband and returning to the first one was not an acceptable solution.

Paul grants to all the unmarried women (which includes maidens, widows, and divorced persons) the privilege of marriage. The woman who left her husband to be more devoted to Christ must either remain under that celibate vow or return to her husband (1 Cor. 6:1-12). He did not impose a cruel single life on anyone.

So, divorce her instead of just separating, and let her remarry. -*1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, Tx. 78130*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1989

OUR CHANGING WORLD

The Richardson East Church of Christ has announced that it will sponsor a series of Christian music concerts on Friday evenings this spring and summer. They see this as an effective way to serve and to reach out to the community and to provide wholesome entertainment for the family. They believe that both their values and their message can be conveyed in this way.

There is one church listed in *Where The Saints Meet: A Directory of the Congregations of the Churches of Christ* by the odd symbol of "A.D. 70." The key explains that this means that they believe that the Lord's coming and kingdom prophecies were fulfilled in A.D. 70. Now comes an announcement by that church, the Parkman Rd. Church of Christ in Warren, Oh., that they are conducting a "Covenant Eschatology Seminar" in July. which will be the first of an annual series. They say this may be the first seminar of its kind, "from the perspective of interpreting 'the last things' within a first-century framework of covenantal change." This church has supported this position, whatever it is, for almost 30 years, under the leadership of Max R. King. It is one more example of the great diversity within Churches of Christ.

Chester Woodhall is a Church of Christ missionary in Zambia, Africa. He now and again sends reports of life-threatening situations at his mission station. The latest is a report of his being accosted by armed bandits at the entrance of his mission. He escaped by quickly reversing his pickup and speeding away. Most of us do not encounter such problems in going to church.

Integrity is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary of publication with some special features. You would do well to read this challenging journal. You can have your name added to the mailing list by writing them at 2919 Lafayette Ave., Lansing, Mi. 48906.

The Brookline (Mass.) Church of Christ has issued a statement as to why women participate in the public worship of that congregation more than in most Churches of Christ. They see it as a matter of being "faithful to the Word and to our context." Appealing to the principle of congregational autonomy, which Churches of Christ have long defended, they believe they have the right to be different. They say, "Brookline seeks to use the gifts God has given us without regard to gender because we have found two distinct imperatives that compel us to do so." The first imperative is that "There is no such thing as male or female in Christ," as per Gal. 3:28. The second imperative is that the passages restricting women's ministry (1 Cor. 14 and I Tim. 2) are to be understood in the context of their communities and are not to be taken literally in other contexts. They say that they value their tradition as a Church of Christ and that their decision is in accord with the best of that tradition.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has issued statistics to the effect that they lost 39,551 members in 1987. Those received by profession of faith declined by 3,000 from the previous year. While they have two fewer presbyteries and five fewer congregations from the year before, they have 234 additional ministers. And giving was up by almost $14 million. Isn't it remarkable that they can keep such records and are willing to share them with the public?

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

Restoration Review, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1989

READERS' EXCHANGE

I am more encouraged each day as the "fellowship-gap" continues to narrow. How we thank God for men of goodwill! These are challenging times. —*Don DeWelt, Joplin, Mo.*

I want to add my name to those giving tribute to you and Carl Ketcherside. I do not have words to express how much I have been blessed by the wonderful truths you have led me to in the Scriptures. It is so precious to be set free from legalism into the sunshine of freedom, -*Rachel Howard, Anderson, In.*

I read your paper, as I have always done, from cover to cover! You help me to think more clearly on various subjects and I learn. We may not always agree, which is no surprise to us, but you are my brother and my friend, and I love you. — *Charles Holt, Box 21584, Chattanooga, Tn. 37421*

(This brother publishes a paper entitled *The Examiner* six times a year, which you will find stimulating. In reading it you might think the editor is angry with the status quo, but you are to remember that anger is often characteristic of a prophet. There is no subscription charge. Write to him at address given. — *Ed.)*

Your paper brings productive thoughts, joy, peace, encouragement, and a diminished inclination to judge others. I am brought to tears of joy and thanksgiving that at last "one of our own" can visit other seekers and servers and report in a loving discourse. Thanks for being the channel that let us share the thoughts of Cecil Hook, Randie Massie, and others. — *Harold Bost, Ft. Worth, Tx.*

The notion that the scriptures of the New Testament were meant to be normative for the Church cannot possibly stand up under careful study. Since these scriptures were collected during the second and third centuries, and were not finally chosen and adopted until the fourth century, it is impossible to assume that they could have been normative for the first century church. Furthermore, the assumption that they should be normative for the contemporary church because they were normative for the first century church (or at least should have been) is without merit, and carries no conviction of authenticity among the leaders of any of the branches of the Church today except those who hang on to fundamentalism. This view does not make the Holy Scriptures any less important for the Church, but it does show the folly of basing an entire theological approach upon a false premise, particularly when this approach leads those who hold it to create divisions within Christ's Church. —*Comer Shacklett, West-field, N.J.*

I especially enjoy your visiting-other-churches series. It is unfortunate that most of us do not expose ourselves to or interact with those in other churches. When one does this it breaks down the gulf created by an "us" and "them" mentality. — *Stephen Allison, Knoxville, Tn.*

Our once narrow little religion has been destroyed and replaced with generous helpings of Jesus' teachings. I am thankful that we can embrace the Bible with a freedom that an "absolutist" can never enjoy without a change of heart. — *Bob Howard, Myrtle Creek, Or.*

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The Hope of the Believer . . .

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BOOK NOTES

Bound Volumes Available

Bound volumes of this journal are avail-able as follows:

Principles of Unity and Fellowship (1977), $5.95
The Ancient Order (1978), *$5.95*
Blessed Are The Peacemakers; With All the Mind (double volume, 1979-80), $10.50
Jesus Today (double volume, 1981-82), $10.50
The Doe of the Dawn (double volume, 1983-84), $10.50

If you order all five volumes the price is only $40.00, postpaid. These are handsomely bound, matching volumes, with colorful dust jackets. Volumes for 1985-86 and 1987-88 will eventually be available.

We also have loose copies available back through the years at 50 cents each for particular issues. We will send you 18 back issues, selected at random by us, for only $3.00. This is a good way for you to see what we have been saying through the years, especially our new readers.

The Stone-Campbell Movement by Leroy Garrett continues to be appreciated by those who read it. It traces the history of Churches of Christ-Christian Churches from their European beginnings to their finally dividing into three churches. $21.95. You can still get this book free when you send us a list if eight subs to this paper, new or renewal, including your own, at $3.00 each, $24.00 total, but you must request the book.

The Fire That Consumes by Edward Fudge questions the old dogma of a never-ending hell, but it does more than that. It is a study of the nature of God in reference to punishment and reward. It will stimulate your thinking. $19.95.

That great little book by John Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*, is again available to our readers at $6.50 postpaid. Based on the letters to the seven churches, it does tell us what Christ thinks of the church in every age.

A veritable goldmine of information on Paul and early Christianity is F. F. Bruce's *Paul: Apostle of the heart Set Free.* It is a 500-page study of the apostle in his historical, literary setting, and it is super. A book that you will return to again and again. $21.95.

Lloyd Boyll has gathered some of the choicest tidbits from the writings of Carl Ketcherside in such areas as brotherhood, fellowship, Christians among the sects, sectarianism, unity, etc. They make up a 41-page booklet entitled *A New Spirit.* It is attractively published and sells at $2.65 postpaid.

All titles mentioned in this column may be bought from us.

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